

THE ELIDA

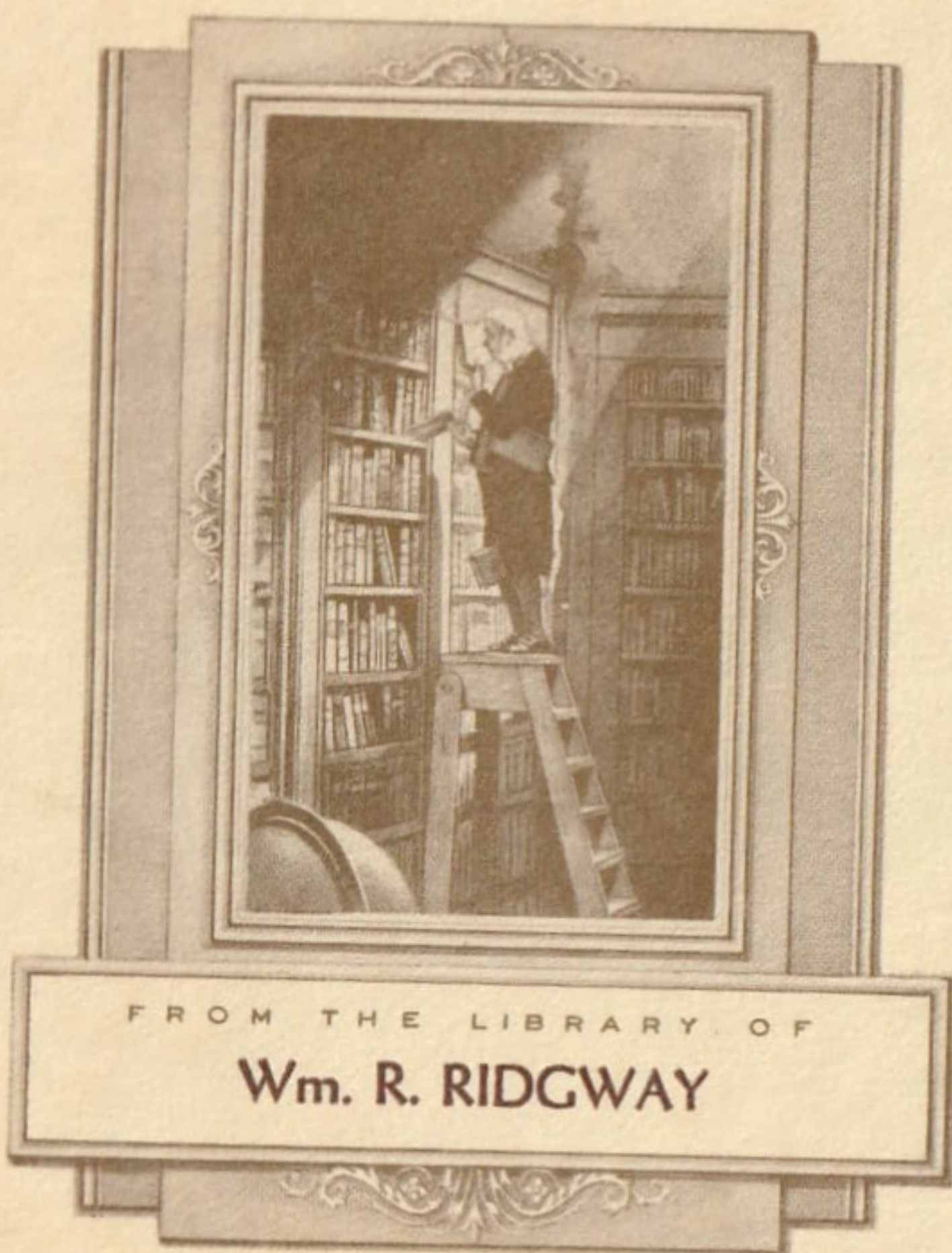
(NEW MEXICO)

STORY



By F. Stanley

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*The Elida,
New Mexico Story*

by

F. Stanley



(Limited to 400 Copies)



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March, 1966

P. O. Box 11, Pep, Texas 79353

The Elida, New Mexico, Story

By F. Stanley

ELIDA IS A FINE LITTLE COMMUNITY of some five hundred people, and is located on the Portales-Roswell highway, closer to Portales than to Roswell. It is in Roosevelt county of which Portales is the county seat. There is another road that cuts in from Dora, a smaller community on State Highway 18. Much of Elida's history entwines itself in the history of another community close by known as Kenna, also in Roosevelt county. Elida is one of the older towns of Roosevelt county, although not an old town compared to others in New Mexico. The town is really on the fringe of the Staked Plains. Buffalo once roamed the site of the city. Comanches and Kiowas camped here. Chisum's cowboys rode the range where houses now stand. Chisum sold his Pecos spread to William P. Littlefield, brother of the more widely known George Washington Littlefield. William's story also fits Kenna. He has been erroneously declared the father founder of Elida by some. Although ranching the area in the Eighties, he made no attempt at founding a town. He lived in Elida and Kenna. John Henry Gee is credited by many for starting the city of Elida. He was born in Falls county, Texas, February 14, 1854, attended school there until he went away to a normal school. He taught in Fisher county. It is said that he founded the town of Emma, but according to the history books Emma was started by R. L. Stringfellow, who later named it to honor Emma Savior, a girl he later married. It was opened with a picnic and a prayer. Town lots sold like hot cakes until Ralls, three miles south, began to mush-

room. When the county seat was moved to Crosbytown, Emma became a ghost town. No doubt Gee was responsible for much of the promotion that made Stringfellow a success. The passing of new homestead laws after the turn of the century opened up the area, and promotion schemes and the arrival of several railroads, colonized New Mexico's eastern borders. Gee promoted the new town of Elida in 1902. He also established a bank in Portales. Later he moved to Carlsbad but spent the last twelve years of his life in the Stratton hotel in Portales. He married Laura Bishop of Mansfield, Louisiana, in 1878. The two children of this marriage became Mrs. Leslie Smith and Mrs. Harry S. Humphrey. Mrs. Gee died in 1898. In 1910 he married Augusta Aschbacher. A daughter married into the Courtney family. He died at the Clovis hospital April 20, 1937. He was buried in Portales. The younger generation knew little of him. Three years after his death when the W. P. A. put out its New Mexico Guide, it failed to mention him as the founder of the town, giving Littlefield the credit, and that in the 80s.

It seemed evident from the start that Elida would be a bustling town. Why it failed to mature into a larger city like Clovis and Portales is baffling, for the people of Elida worked like beavers to put the town on the map. Newspapers, cement works, race (horse) track, saloons, stores, schools became part and parcel of the city as in every town. Somehow it failed to take hold. Perhaps it was too close to Portales. Whatever the reason, it remained in status quo. The newspaper editor did try hard to publicize the town. While it gave us lots of news about Elida, it failed to do anything else. Kenna gave no news of the town and fared less successful than Elida. The Kenna paper gave pages of world news but it takes more than a magnifying glass to ferret out happenings in that town. On the other hand, the editor of the Elida paper was very much put out because the rest of the world did not migrate to his town. The more he advertised the town's assets the less space he had for world news. Personally, more papers should have followed suit. Naturally our knowledge of Elida is more complete

than Kenna. Even the Portales paper carried Elida items. Choice bits of gossip and doings help give us an insight to the city's past:

"Monroe and Pitt have doubled the size of their restaurant. John Lum, the postmaster, gave bond this week and Elida will have a money order office real soon. Henry Arendell's saloon was robbed Monday evening, while the proprietor was at supper. The thief was apprehended and taken before Squire Youngblood who fined him twelve dollars and gave him one year in the bastile." (PORTALES HERALD, Feb. 4, 1904).

W. C. Grant and C. E. Hall were partners in the ELIDA NEWS. Grant sold his share to Hall, who in turn sold it to J. R. Darnell, at the same time buying into Darnell's real estate business. The people of Elida got together and put the finishing touches on the school building. They also set up hitching posts for the pupils riding to school on horseback. Silas McCabe built a house at the south edge of town. W. F. English no sooner finished his house when it caught fire and burned to the ground. Charles Simms opened a mercantile store. R. H. Morrow used Elida cement in building his four-room house. Elida had more than its share of fires during the early days:

"According to advices received here Tuesday, Elida has been the scene of another disastrous fire, the fifth to break out in the business section during the past twelve months. The fire broke out in Boyd's meat market at about sunrise Monday morning and consumed the three frame buildings which up to that time had successfully withstood the ravages of the former conflagrations. The buildings destroyed, together with their contents, were the meat market, the Elida hotel and McAlester & Sherlock's general store. It is thought the fire was of incendiary origin. No fire had been in the meat market for some time, and the store was locked when the fire started. Mr. Boyd lives in the country near Elida and was on his way to town when the alarm sounded. Elida is without a fire department, and except for the heroic work done by the bucket brigade, the flames were unopposed. The buildings were one story ex-

cept for the hotel, which was two. The general store had a big stock of goods, the estimated cost of which was four thousand dollars. The amount of insurance, if any, is not known. (o.c.)

Wilson Orr did not keep his saloon long. He sold it to Charles Chitwood. Church was an important factor in the lives of the early settlers. The first settlers were Baptists. These were the Templetons, Savages, Anthonys, Rieks, Lanes, Hawkins, Youngbloods. On April 5, 1903, they met in an office of the lumberyard and organized their church. The first pastor, Rev. H. Covington, arrived on July 5, 1903. A Sunday School was organized in 1904 and a Ladies Aid in 1905. Other pastors to follow through the years were W. C. Grant, J. W. Oliver, C. D. Spillman, J. A. Cassidy, D. B. Jackson, W. P. Weeks, S. M. Edwards, C. A. Todd, R. A. Day, J. W. Evans and A. W. Cameron.

Dee Harkey wrote a book titled MEAN AS HELL, in which he mentions his experiences at Elida. Evident he was ranching around the area at the time. While the case as presented in the courthouse records Vol. 1, page 350, Case No. 344 Daniel (Dee) R. Harkey, Assault With a Deadly Weapon, in no way approximates what he has to say in the book — court records are always dry and to the point anyway — it is annoying to think that Elida and the courtroom at Portales did not look upon Dee Harkey as the great lawman one would imagine him to be after reading the book. Elida did not take kindly to Dee's wacking its doctor over the head with the axe handle. Nor did the doctor. Perhaps they should have stepped out into the street and faced each other with six-shooters. It seems that at first Dee pleaded not guilty, but upon the advice of his lawyer, he changed it to guilty. According to the books, the case costs amounted to \$337.55. Evidently Dee enough of Elida. After the trial he seems to have gone to Carlsbad. The ROOSEVELT COUNTY HERALD for June 8, 1911, carries this short item:

"Sheriff R. A. Bain was called to Elida Tuesday night by long distance telephone to arrest Dee Harkey who is charged with frightfully having pommelled Dr. G. W. Cut-

ler, a man of some sixty years of age, with an axe handle. The sheriff returned to Portales early yesterday morning having in his custody the accused man, being accompanied by Editor Darnell of Elida. Harkey has been refused bail by the justice of the peace of Elida precinct and is committed to jail here pending the action of the grand jury. It will be remembered that Harkey is the person who appeared as witness in the Zumwalt Brothers case for the murder of the Hall Brothers, being one of the two parties who were eye witnesses to the tragedy. The assault with which he is now charged is said to have grown out of a heated argument between the two men on a frivolous matter." (o.c.)

Obviously Elida was not impressed with Harkey's prowess as a lawman. On the other hand, Harkey mentions Littlefield casually as if he were mentioning another rancher or cowpoke. Dimension is the clothing of time. Elida had numerous fraternal organizations, not the least of which was the Modern Woodmen of the World. These sponsored the Fourth of July picnics. It was a day for barbecued beef, barrel races, horse races, foot races, ball games. Charles E. Hall sold his interests in Elida and moved to Altus, Oklahoma. He and another had founded the ELIDA NEWS, the Farmers Savings Bank. He served for a time as U. S. Commissioner, and devoted some time to the study of law. James A. Hall, a pioneer, was an early day lawyer in Elida. J. E. Wall owned the Central Hotel, Dr. J. W. Smith was a physician and surgeon, Dr. A. J. Evans was another, and E. A. Erwin was the auctioneer. Campbell's barber shop was on Main Street. C. L. Pyron was the shoemaker. Bill Gore was another auctioneer; George Ray sold real estate; Lee Percifull and Neal Rockey opened the P & R garage. The ELIDA ENTERPRISE was founded in 1916. Elida also had a Methodist church. J. I. Kelley was pastor in 1919. A number of boys served in World War I. Herschel Rick was the first boy to enlist and the last to return home. After the war he and a friend went to Texas to help harvest in the fields. He was struck by lightning and killed. Burney Strum, John Myers, Mike Mills, Arthur Sturman, James Roberts, George Wallis, Dolphia Roberts, were some of the boys in the ser-

vice. J. M. Taylor had a transfer service. Ed Hall eventually moved to Holdenville, Oklahoma. Dr. B. B. McGee served in the medical corps during the First World War. The year the war ended one hundred and forty students were enrolled in the school. There were thirty-one in the high school, twenty-three of these freshmen. Addie West made the Honor Roll in the 11th grade; Anne J. West, Ray Burton, Vaughan McCray, Martha Beeman, Marjorie Swagerty, Ercel Tusha, John Beeman made the Honor Roll in the other grades. Dewey Burton bought the P & R garage. C. A. Sacker was mayor of Elida in 1919. On May 14, 1920, the Elida high school gave a play entitled The Dear Boy Graduates.

Act One — Examinations ----- I Feel Like a Walking
 Encyclopedia Bound in Calf
 Act II — Athletics ----- Tickled? Why, Kid I'M It
 Act III — Orations ----- The Dear Boy
 Act IV — Commencement ----- Thank Heaven, The Dear
 Boy Has Graduated

Characters

Clyde Walker, the Dear Boy ----- Roy McRorey
 Genevie Walker, his sister ----- Vera McCray
 Mamie Walker, the little sister ----- Marjorie Baynard
 Caroline Walker, his mother ----- Velma Walker
 Grandma Walker, with ideas ----- Miss Johnson
 Mrs. Mary Milton, an aunt ----- Esther Dolby (substitute)
 Helen Milton, a country cousin ----- Velma Dolby
 Mrs. Martha Westfield, an aunt ----- Louise Beard
 Leona Westfield, a city cousin ----- Ruby Cannon
 Bessie Moore, the Dear Boy's best girl ----- Iris Percifull
 Annie Walker, his old maid aunt -----s----- Bernice Haye
 Tom Leonard, Dick Reld, Harry Duff,
 his chums ----- Leroy Roberts, Olbert Tryston, Elmer
 Beard
 Professor ----- Whitney Jones
 Professor ----- Roy Hudson
 The Coach ----- Ray Burton (substitute)
 The Principal ----- James Chilton

H I S U N C L E J O H N

A play to be given by the high school students at the auditorium Saturday night, May 5, 1920.

Characters

Mr. Jack Sanderson, of the Class of 1918,
formerly of Northwestern ----- Embry Wall
Nellie Holmer Sanderson, his wife, who would
rather tell his uncle, anyway ----- Addie West
Uncle John Van Courtland, who thinks a young
man married is a young man married - Gordon Chilton
Mrs. John Van Courtland ----- Magnie Baynard (?)
Bert Allison, his sworn chum, who is nothing
if not loyal ----- Earl Stark
Lucy Harrington, his sworn chum's sweetheart, who
has always been crazy to visit Drake U. - Ruth Roberts
'Nubbins' Goodwin, his football friend ---- Clifford Gower
Mrs. Slatter, his landlady ----- Rachel Johnson

Prologue

Mr. Van Courtland's law office one morning in June, 1910.
"It's an ill poker game that blows nobody any good."

Act One

The buffet sitting room of Mr. and Mrs. Jade Sanderson's apartment, Drake University, one morning in November, 1916.

'All is not lost in falling.'

Act Two

The afternoon of the same day.

'Well, brother, I'm bobbed.'

Act Three

The evening of the same day.

'Well, I've seen a gunnin play at last.'

Elida also had Chautauquas; B. F. Cook had a drug store; Dr. D. B. McGee had his office in the Oddfellow building; Mrs. J. T. Hunter operated a millinery store; B. J. Cook had the corner confectionery; Arthur Andrews published the ELIDA ENTERPRISE every Friday; William Carl Case, an early settler, moved to Philipsburg, Missouri. He authored a novel called The Nestors which was a best

seller in its day; Guy Gould leased the Aschbacker building to open an ice cream parlor; J. W. Colman and John C. Thurman, early settlers, passed away in 1920. Elida was always proud of its schools and continued to boost for pupils if not for morale.

“Elida is in a position to attract many people who live in the country too far away from adequate school facilities, and great opportunities are offered which may benefit the town and our school. Consolidation is a great thing, and a good thing, but it is hard on little children to ride a long distance even in a closed vehicle. Harder still for little feet to prod through to inadequate school houses that lack the ordinary comforts. Again in many families there are one or two things — sending them away to school is expensive and sometimes not all together wise — Letting them quit is curtailing their education, and thereby their usefulness in life. This is where Elida comes in. The town can accommodate many extra families. We have a comfortable school house and it is up to the trustees to give the people a strong faculty — men and women who are capable of teaching our children the best things that make the best citizens of our country. We believe that this is what we are going to have in the school faculty this coming year. Prof. Clyde, who has taught for several years in Artesia, New Mexico, will be superintendent. There are some vacancies still in the high school. Mrs. Rachel Johnson will teach the 7th and 8th grades, Henry Miller will teach the 5th and 6th, Dora Reed will teach the 3rd and 4th.” (o.c.)

Oldtimers will remember the Acker wagon yard; they will also remember such names as Ruth Roberts, Doris Reed, Hazel Reed, Tina Mae Locker, Bessie Howard. The public continued to be informed of all the town activities: “Our picnic here last Monday (Labor Day) was fine and dandy — the largest in our opinion the town has ever had, although few contend otherwise. Be that as it may, there were certainly some people here. We read a statement recently that the U.S. had 92% of all the cars manufactured in the world, but we doubted it at the time. Picnic day convinced us the statement is conservative, and the entire output was

here, except possibly a few ones on which the paint had not yet dried. How it came to pass that all the autos in the world were rushed to Elida just for a one-day picnic, we don't know, but they were here. With the exception of an occasional gust of wind, the day was ideal — not too hot, not too cool, and the crowd enjoyed the occasion far beyond expectancy. The Portales band rendered good music, Major Atwood, candidate for Lt. Governor, delivered an excellent oration, and then dinner. Two tables, each extending halfway across the park, were loaded with barbecued beef, bread, coffee and country goodies, and three thousand good eaters attempted to unload them, but didn't quite succeed; there were a few baskets left over. As soon as the crowd got rested up after dinner the sports were put on, and continued nearly all the afternoon. The exhibition of farm products proved an eye opener. The Indian corn exhibit was especially fine. In the horse races the horse of G. T. Littlefield won. Guy Howell won the goat roping contest; Jeff Peach won the bronco busting; Portales won the baseball game 7-3." (o.c.)

John C. Thurman, born in Melvin, Tenn., on September 10, 1865, married Lou Hall, settled in Elida and raised ten children. The Fourth of July was always a day of days in Elida. Portales was usually scheduled for a ball game. Judah was a catcher for Elida and Jackson and Lucas the star pitchers. W. B. Gilliam became pastor of the Methodist church; L. R. Day, pastor of the Baptist church. In 1921 the Elida ball team was made up of Struman, Boles, Click, Erwin, Courtney, Deering, Judah, Acker and Cook. Olmer & Bert Gore built the gin in Elida during the summer of 1923. The Women's Christian Temperance League was organized in 1921. Mrs. A. A. Beemar was president; Myrtle Howard, secretary; Mrs. Justin Click, treasurer. When school opened on Monday the first week of September in 1923 the teachers were Miss Roberts, Miss Reudan, Miss McDowell, Mr. Campbell, and the total enrollment was one hundred and sixty-one. Alvin White became editor of the ELIDA ENTERPRISE. It was the year Mrs. Mary Clark died. She was born on January 9, 1847, and came to New Mexico in 1903.

She left two children, Mrs. Tina Allen of Clovis and Edward Tusha of Elida. Her husband also survived her. During that year Rev. J. B. Brown served as Methodist minister; the boy scouts were organized in the high school and the students also started the Busy Bee Club; Prof. McKinley was superintendent of schools; school was dismissed for three weeks in November so that the students could pick cotton; Rev. Hershel Thurston succeeded Rev. Brown; the Christian Church celebrated its first anniversary; a meeting was held at the Evans drug store to discuss the possibility of an electric light plant for Elida. "Thanksgiving services will be held in Elida next Thursday, November 29th. There will be a Sunrise Prayer Meeting at the Baptist church. There will be an appropriate service at the Methodist church. At 11:15 the ladies of the Missionary Society will begin serving dinner at the Central hotel." (o.c.). THE ROOSEVELT COUNTY RECORD continued as the newspaper of Elida when the others failed. Another paper of short duration was the ELIDA S. W. HOLINESS MESSENGER founded by Rev. O. B. Kelley to animate the members of his congregation. The railroad depot was built in 1910.

"Elida's new five thousand dollar depot is a credit not only to the progressive citizenship of the town but also to the credit of the Santa Fe railroad officials who were directly responsible for its erection. (It seems that the prior depot burned to the ground and insurance companies, as well as the railroad, helped in rebuilding.) While the depot is a frame structure, it is as modern as any of the new depots along the right of way of the Santa Fe through the great Pecos valley. The size of the new railroad depot is 28 by 80 feet, and is divided into freight and express rooms and a combination ticket and telegraph office. Material has been ordered for a brick platform on the west side to be 12 by 144 feet and for a loading platform on the east side." (o.c. April 7, 1910).

Elida came in for its share of excitement the day three men decided to rob the bank: "Jim Traylor was finishing his lunch as he sat in full view and directly facing the First National Bank from his cate-cornered angle position of his

filling station at 12:30 on Friday, April 22, 1917. He is accustomed to seeing cars of every description stop at the bank. Abstractly he noticed a pea-green coupe drive up from the west, turn the bank corner, and park on the east side of the bank building with hood about opposite the back end. As three men stepped out and walked leisurely along the side of the bank to the front side walk, it was Mr. Traylor's idea that they might be oil field workers from their dress. They proceeded in more or less single file, first a smallish man about the size of Jim Swaggerty, dressed in blue overalls and a coat of dark material; second a heavy set man with red somewhere on his dress — probably a lumber jacket — and a third, a taller man, in dirty, greasy khaki overalls. They disappeared into the bank. Finishing his lunch, Mr. Traylor picked up a document which he intended to show Cashier Click and started across the street to the bank. The side door opened and the trio who had gotten out of the Pontiac Six, emerged in the same order. Traylor's suspicions were aroused. He noted the number of the car and hastened his steps toward the bank. Raymond Roberts had made a deposit and was on his way out. The shorter man pointed a gun at him; the taller man pointed a gun over the shoulder of the short man. Roberts was marched to the cage through the office. Cashier Justin Click was also covered. Ben Drake, the bookkeeper, was reading a magazine. He was so absorbed in his reading that the bandit had to call out 'Hands Up' twice before he realized it was a hold-up. They were told to lie down on the floor, faces down. Traylor, noting something was wrong, gave the alarm. In less than five minutes five cars were in pursuit. They lost the trail and returned." (o.c.)

The bandits continued on to a frame house. There they concocted a story about car trouble and the urgency of a ride to Clovis where they had to board a train for Amarillo. The farmer complied. One of the men was named Jack Dyer. Pockets bulging with money, he entered a tavern where he plied himself with drink and began talking wildly. He flashed both gun and bank roll at customers telling of his part in the robbery. Meantime, the farmer came to

town for his Saturday shopping. There he heard the many versions of the robbery that brought him to Sheriff Poindexter's office. He seemed certain that the three men he took to Clovis were the culprits. The sheriff boarded the train for Amarillo. There he learned that "Texas McGee" as Dyer called himself, roomed at the Verdun Hotel. He was still sleeping off his drunk when Poindexter caught up with him. The sheriff also rounded up the other two men in less than a month's time. After the sheriff's term of office ran out, he moved to Elida where he became the town's first deputy sheriff. He was later succeeded by Fred Maxwell, then by George Gibson. Elida's new forty thousand dollar high school was completed in 1927. The graduates this year were Artie Miller, Ercel Tusha, Virgil Cryer, Emil Herbert, Hearst Paxton, Berlin Barnard, Clifford Suffdy, Curtis Kimmons. The 8th grade graduates were Leonard Puston, Ruth Byrum, Herbert Savage, Letha Wall, Clara Lockwood, Icey Butler, Hershel Gore, Ruth Miller, Margie Moore, Clifford Stephenson, Finnis Cannon, Herman Grimes, Luie Hall, Juanita Ray, Elva Tumlinson, Francis Grimes, Ethel Manis, Zelma Davis, Veda Rogers. E. R. Cannon opened the first movie theatre in Elida. Rec. Wm. A. Kuykendall was pastor of the Baptist church in Elida in 1935. The Kemp Lumber Company razed its Elida buildings in 1934. The high school graduates that year were Allene Abbott, Murel Abbott, Maurine Archer, Lucille Burbridge, Cheaves Butler, Talmadge Corbill, James Crosby, Vera Davis, Lucille Gore, Louise Graham, Hotona Hennrix, Roberta Henson, Gladys Kilgore, LaVerne Lightfoot, Kathryn McCabe, Emmett McCombs, Frances McCowan, Robert McKinley, Glenn Nilklas, Nona Powell, Cubie Ridgeway, Temple Rogers, G. W. Southward, Parolee Vigus, Arthur Burris West and Lillian Wilmes. H. C. McCowen continued to plug Elida in his journal. Here is a sample of his editorials:

" 'I'm dead sot again' straight cotton farming or any other one or even two crop systems of agriculture. It is risky, monotonous, unwise, unprofitable, unbusiness like and what is essentially to the point unsuitable to Eastern New Mexico. Diversification in any clime is good. Here it is im-

perative and should include animal industry in one or more forms. There is no questioning the ultimate success of a Roosevelt county farmer who takes cream to town once or twice a day, has a hog butchering once or twice each year, who grows his own grist, smacks his lips into his own melons, cooks his own pintos, keeps a bale or two of cotton on hand for a better price and in whose sheds can be found a few bales of broom corn during periods of 'cheap sweeping' along with the bins of grain and stacks of feed. Because the farmer who has sense enough to live on a cash basis will have work enough to give him fresh air in all kinds of weather and will provide enough kinds of nourishing feed to strengthen the body against disease. To co-ordinate so many different kinds of work requires and promotes alertness of mind and maintains the interest of the farmer and his family. They would rather stay at home than go to town. Their opportunity and desire to spend money for amusement is reduced to a minimum. Vacations are not required. God loves busy farmers who feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and busy farmer people come to love God seeing His omnipotence in the increasing herd and growing crops." (o.c.)

Mrs. Charles M. Waters and Nellie Ziegler bought a building, had it remodeled, and opened it as the Bankhead Hotel. When it was learned that Elida had eight cars, the number required to join the A A A, it made news. The car owners were George T. Littlefield, John Slad, Z. T. Campbell, B. F. Cook, Bankhead Hotel, E. L. Raydon, R. E. Tusha, Raymond Roberts. Littlefield was mayor of Elida in 1927. One of Elida's pioneers was Judge J. E. Wallis, a native of Texas. Born on February 17, 1848, he served in the Confederate Army. After the war he married Emma Gaines of Clarksville, Texas, and raised four children. After the death of his first wife he married Edna A. Kinard of Rome, Georgia, and moved to Indian Territory in 1897. When the town of Prague was later built on the site of his home he opened a general store. He came to New Mexico in 1904 as foreman of the Hagerman Ranch, and homesteaded fifteen miles northwest of Elida. He moved to Elida in 1916. He

died in 1933. He was survived by his wife, three sons and five daughters. The teachers at the school in 1933 were F. R. McKinley, superintendent; H. E. Morgan, principal; Maureen Harper, Fred Morgan, principal of the grade school; Miss Allen, Juanita Bell, Gertrude Thomas, French Pate, J. Leslie, Miss Peeples.

“Between twelve and fifteen hundred people attended the Elida picnic on July 4th (1933). The program of young folks contests began promptly at 10 a.m. The following are names of the winning contestants in the morning athletic events:

Pillow fight	W. T. Savage
Suit case race	Offit
Stake race	Jerry McKee
Sack race	Arlin Offitt
Egg race	John Ed Roberts
Board race	Joy Hollinsworth
Fat boys race	Junior Click
Girls race	Alice Latta
Turtle race	Bruce Bird
Relay race	E. T. Smith
Old man's race	Jim Davis

“At 10:05 the Roberson band music began and Dr. Evans gave the address of welcome. Joe Farha, Portales grocer, gave a speech. W. C. Thorp and J. F. Hoover also gave speeches as did O. P. Bartlett and Bob Roberts. The Kilgore Brothers Rodeo performed. Elida won its ball game.”

Rosalie Littlefield became the postmaster of Elida on September 21, 1933. (Postmasters have informed me that there is no such thing as a postmistress). The ROOSEVELT COUNTY RECORD was founded in 1926. Two years before that it was known as the ENTERPRISE RECORD. The KENNA RECORD and the ELIDA ENTERPRISE merged on May 1, 1924. Before that, beginning on October 2, 1916, it was known as the ELIDA ENTERPRISE. W. T. Cowgill started it at Elida at the spot where the theatre was later built. Later he moved his shop to a small building on the site of the building of Morgan & Son. Then it was moved to the north side of the square. Later the publisher bought

the building. The owners and publishers of the KENNA RECORD were J. C. Greaves, W. T. Cowgill and Don Savage. The latter was from Roswell. Although the date of Founding is given as February 8, 1907, there seems to be a discrepancy of two years. Somehow the error was never corrected, and all papers went along with the date.

"Members of Elida's younger set are still talking of the so-called 'barn dance' held at Cannon's about two weeks ago. Introduction of the 'Paul' Jones was largely responsible for the fun had on this occasion. Price Crume of Kenna did the calling and of course his share of swinging. Music was furnished entirely by local talent, the musicians being Pauline Robinson, pianist, Ed Gore leader of his Timekeepers orchestra, and Messrs. Orb Martin, Elmer Pruitt and Preston Tumilson. At this social affair two vivacious young ladies proved to be no other than the Misses Edna and Maria Smith recently moved to the Manis ranch west of Elida and they and their parents are from Center, Colorado. Howard Jasper was there with his Christmas bride, the former Katheryn Mace of Floyd." (o.c. March 4, 1937).

High school graduates in Elida for 1937 were Doak Bird, Paul Hoover, Bill McCombs, Bernard Cook, Burns Wison, Willard Graves, Tom Chrestman, Ardery Hardt. Guy Holmes. The Valedictorian was Rebecca Sears, the Salutatorian, Catherin Stevenson. The girl graduates were: Neva Gower, Marie Metcalf, Lucille Laughlin, Hazel Murphy, Catherin Stevenson, Rebecca Sears. The 8th grade graduates were Freddie Berryhill, Monte Cochrain, Liddon, Wayne Crume, Joan French, Violet Hollingsworth, Pauline Haddow, Clinton Hawkins, Juanita Jones, Loveta Jones, Maxine Lughlin, Edna McGill, Orville Roberts, Billie Lucille Swagerty and Wilma Caywood. Marie Gregory taught Home Economics that year; George Weaver taught Mathematics and Physics; Thelma Black taught the 4th and 5th grades; Jewel White taught the 2nd and 3rd grades; Lonie Hunt taught the primary. Monte Barton was the grade school principal; Troy Guthrie was principal of the high school. Other teachers were A. L. Roberts and Martha Jackson. This was the year that Elida opened its horse race

track. A horse named Bird won the first race. The Elida high school paper was known as THE STANDARD. The school continued to give plays through the years. In time it also developed a fine football team, a basketball team for girls as well as boys.

Although horse racing never took hold at Elida as it did later on at Raton and Ruidoso Downs, it was enjoyable while it lasted. No doubt the people did not feel that racing was very Christian due to the betting. There were those conscientiously opposed to betting, racing, smoking and drinking. When the 18th Amendment was repealed Elida was not interested in the sale of liquor in the town any more than was Portales, Elida, Rogers, Pep, Dora and the area towns. Somehow the town managed to hold on. In 1930 when the Depression was at its height, Elida kept its head high under the mayorship of O. C. Herbert. Acker & Cook had the feed and fuel business; Allen operated a filling station; Mrs. G. C. Harris had the Bankhead Hotel; Jack Berry had a paint and paper-hanging business; Burton & Roberts ran a real estate office; Butler had a grocery store; L. S. Campbell had a barbershop; Cannon had a freight business; 'Prof' Cullins had a second hand store; the Central Hotel did good business; then there was the Elida Power & Light plant; the Elida Telephone exchange; the Evans drug store owned and operated by Dr. A. Evans; Dolph Hensley was the town carpenter; Mr. and Mrs. Mercial had the Home Bakery; J. E. Wallis operated a popcorn stand; there was the Kemp Lumber Company; Myers and Pullen had the Oasis Garage; Raydon had the Chevrolet car showroom; Mrs. Dolby ran a confectionery store in conjunction with her cafe; H. C. McCowen was editor and publisher of the ROOSEVELT COUNTY RECORD. Nor did the students at school let down on their studies because there was a slack in all the business centers of the land. The Honor Roll that year carried the names of Arthur West, Geraldine Savage, Robert McKinley, Louise Graham, Jewel Evans, Vera Davis, Mary Cleveland. These were all Freshmen. The Sophomores on the Honor Roll were Frances Sears, Marie Gonzolez, Jessie Gibson, Anita French. The Juniors were Ralph

Stephenson, Lucille Bird, A. C. Holder. The Seniors were Clifford Stephenson, Vera Myers, Esther Harde, Zelma Davis. The 8th graders making the Honor Roll were Billie Chilton, F. F. Rogers, Joe Smith, Fay Lemons, C. H. Letton, Elizabeth Tunlison.

The school also continued to give plays. It was also the year that the Elida High Orchestra made its first appearance in uniform. Later this orchestra developed into the Elida High Band. "On Tuesday night, Novembtr 4th, the high school music and drama departments will present an interesting program of music, entertainment. The chorus, orchestra and dramatic classes, under the direction of Miss Maureen Harper, have been working on this program for some time. It has been impossible to work with each group every day because so many students go out on trucks (harvest season), but Miss Harper states that all the students and teachers have been cooperating beautifully, and she expects the program to be outstanding. The play to be presented, 'The Ghost Hunters,' is particularly adapted to the Halloween season.

The Cast

Homer	-----	Earnest Kilgore
Bob	-----	Warren Butler
Marge	-----	Maggie Moore
Bunny	-----	Bertha Rickard
Policeman	-----	Tim Hennessey
Ghost	-----	Laverne Nicklas
Ghost	-----	Clifford Stephenson

Another one-act play, 'Serving for the Heathen,' will also be presented." (o.c.). The program proved a success for it took in \$61.50, a tidy sum for depression days. The Thompson-Letton Lumber Company was the pioneer lumber company of Elida. After twenty-seven years it was sold to the Kemp Lumber Company. H. C. Letton was manager of the company since it was founded. Elida was fortunate enough to have completed its new forty thousand dollar high school before the economic crisis changed the business face of America. There is no doubt that the farms were affected but Elida refused to let it make a difference. Is

has been erased as a bad dream.

One of the beloved citizens of Elida was Rev. W. R. Bynum. He was born at Wills Point, Texas, July 9, 1879, and married Bamma Omega Walker on January 18, 1899. They had seven children. He became a minister in 1900 and after serving in various posts came to Elida in 1925. He also served Kenna. After years of faithful service, he died on August 8, 1959, and was buried in the Elida cemetery. Elida was quite active during World War II not only in sending a quota of men to serve their country, but also in helping out at home where chapters of the Red Cross, Four H and church organizations worked for the cause. After the war Elida took on a new growth in business, school and church activities. Nevertheless, fires and other disasters visited the town.

"A fire which brought a \$45,000 to \$50,000 loss to Elida raged for several hours Saturday evening and left the north side of the square a smoldering mass. The Wall & Son grocery store, the ROOSEVELT COUNTY RECORD (newspaper) and Wallis hotel and rooming house were the buildings completely destroyed. The fire is reported to have started in the rear apartment on the second floor where the Louis Lee family lived, but they had gone to the picture show. Kenneth Ward and his family had the front apartments on the second floor and were attracted by some smoke whipping across the front porch. Upon investigation, they found the entire rear in flames and crawled to the top of the grocery store and reached the ground, by means of a ladder. Mr. and Mrs. Ward have three children. The hotel was a two-story structure erected about forty years ago by R. M. Rockey and after it was closed as a commercial hotel was used as a rooming house. Mrs. Wallis was at Tucumcari at the time of the fire visiting her son George who lives in that city. Mrs. Dolph Hensley of Elida is a daughter of Mrs. Wallis, and has moved some of the furniture from the front of the building to her home. Embury Wall erected his new grocery store on the location which for many years was the Sam Slack produce house, and moved into same about the first of February. It was a modern

grocery with many of the new electrical modern conveniences. He carried some insurance but his loss is only about half covered. Jimmy Blair is manager of the grocery store for Mr. Wall and was preparing to get the night bus to Portales for a week-end visit with his family when the fire was discovered. With the help of other resident the frozen locker units were taken to places of safety. Some of the canned goods along the west wall were salvaged although the labels were all burned away. The Wall & Son furniture, undertaking and hardware supplies are in the buildings on the west side of the square. H. C. McCowen, who owned and operated the ROOSEVELT COUNTY RECORD, suffered a complete loss as he carried no insurance on either the building or the plant. The publication was made in Portales this week for Mr. McCowen at the PORTALES TRIBUNE office and doubtless this practice will continue until Mr. McCowen can decide on his future plans. He purchased the Elida paper in December ,1920, from George Walis and W. S. Cowgill and has since operated same. This was the only paper in Elida (i. e. at the time of the fire — Elida had several papers in the past) and the citizens are anxious to have the publication continued. The Elida fire department was inadequate to cope with the fast spreading flames and the Portales fire department was called in to assist with the fighting. The fire is reported to have started about eight o'clock." (o.c.)

Lonnie and Herman Corbitt, barbers in Elida, also opened a shop in Portales. Dr. C. T. Kibbe was elected mayor of Elida in 1946. Elida was the home of Major Nunn, son of Mrs. J. I. Nunn, who conceived, designed and built the G. H. Trainer used by the United States Army. The high school graduates in 1946 were Betty Jean Brink, Frances Davis, Ernestine Howard, Spal Nicholas, Madge Roberson, Patsy Southard, Martha Swagerty, Bob Anthony, Marvin Cruse, Mays Jenkins, Jackson Lowe, Dennis Taylor, Charlotte Kimmons, Arthur Graves. The 8th Grade graduates were: Alice Oneri, Carrol Roma, Joyce DePrist, Lou Helen Dunaway, Edna James, Vesta Josephine Jenkins, Eyvonne Janelle Luderbock, Onita Janelle Slack, Christine Lavon

Thurman, Buna Jean Tucker, Cora Jean Vaughn, Peggy Louise Wilcox, Dorothy Longley, Larry Eugene Caywood, Charles Wayne Kilgore, Richard Grant Lathrop, Leroy Lowe, Darrell Kary Wall. The school continued to grow and flourish. In fact, its track teams, baseball teams, basketball teams and football teams are becoming more widely known throughout the state. The 1960 graduates were George Byrd, Clovie Chunn, Sam Howell, Roland Barnard, Johnny Tivis, Vickie Cox, Mary Worley, Lola K. Doyal, Brenda Cryer, Katie Peterson, Viola Grower.

There is so much more that can be written about the pretty town off the highway a little as one moves to or from Roswell and Portales. From the highway it looks like a bit of old New England in the Land of Enchantment. It belongs to the new breed of New Mexico towns as does Clovis, Roswell, Portales, Carlsbad, within the living memory of many. It dates beyond the writings of H. H. Bancroft, R. E. Twitchell, but not beyond Coan. Many towns fall into this category which is why they must be written up for future generations. Tolbar, Texico, St. Vrain, Kenna that had their moment of glory even after Coan passed on. Not even the New Mexico Guide Book mentions towns like Tolvar, and they deserve mention because they are part of New Mexico.

